

WKRK TV, Mobile-Pensacola Localism Initiatives

WKRK TV provides 36.5 hours of local news each week. Within the last year, WKRK added an hour local newscast at 9am. A minimum of ninety percent of these newscasts is derived from local content. WKRK.com is used to enhance the content of local news by providing additional details such as contact names and video from the story. WKRK news utilizes Survey USA to research local issues and report the results in newscasts. Significant issues such as education, crime solutions, environmental concerns, consumer issues and health are reported in all newscasts.

Local community groups are given the opportunity to appear Monday through Friday in the 6am, 7am, 9am and noon news broadcasts. The interviews vary in length from 2 minutes to 5 minutes. Some of the groups include, The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, The Better Business Bureau, Family Counseling Center, The American Red Cross, and The United Way of Southwest Alabama.

Local news issues are enhanced by local experts. For example, many physicians appear on the Housecalls segment, financial planners appear on the Money Matters segment, and local dieticians cook healthy recipes on Take 5.

WKRK TV produces many local specials that air outside the traditional newscast times. Most recently, WKRK News 5 produced and aired a special, The Crash of Sunset Limited, on the 10th anniversary of that event in our community. We produced and aired "Frederic's Fury," on the 25th anniversary of Hurricane Frederic hitting our area. Weekly specials are produced for high school football in the area from September until December. Three hours of live pre-game are produced before the annual Alabama Auburn football game, one of the oldest rivalries in college football.

WKRK is "weather coverage you can count on." And in September of this year, the station provided 110 hours of continuous coverage of Hurricane Ivan. From the approach to the aftermath, the WKRK anchor and weather teams provided the most up-to-the-minute details. Our staff utilized Baron's Viper, Fastrac Street Level, and our own Doppler for tracking the storm. An additional satellite truck was provided by one of our sister stations to complement coverage from the WKRK truck.

When the hurricane had passed, WKRK partnered with several local agencies, including the American Red Cross, The United Way of Southwest Alabama, The Community Foundation and sponsor Bruno's to raise approximately \$270,000 for hurricane relief efforts.

WKRK has weather monitoring stations in three local elementary schools and the local science museum.

WKRK takes the Storm Tour on the road several times per year. WKRK meteorologists speak to audiences about severe weather, weather forecasting and have demonstrations of weather phenomenon. Most of the time these tours are held in school auditoriums.

WKRG participates in the AMBER Alert system and the EAS.

Local and national elections are covered within the newscasts and during live primetime coverage. Political Candidates are given free airtime in the 5pm newscast to air a ninety-second message taped in our studio. WKRG has produced a live one-hour town hall discussion on a lottery vote and a half hour pre-produced special on a tax reform.

WKRG supports many local civic and cultural activities. America's Junior Miss, The Senior Bowl, GMAC Bowl, BayFest and the Greater Gulf State Fair are all supported through air time and news coverage. WKRG devotes eight hours of live coverage to Mardi Gras in Mobile. Expanded news coverage follows stories with major impact on the city, like the cruise terminal opening.

WKRG airs approximately 30 public service announcements each week. The issues range from underage drinking to voting machine information. WKRG offers free production to many groups to publicize issues or events. For instance, public service announcements were produced for The Mobile Police Department to talk about driving safety and the Mobile Opera promoted an upcoming concert.

WKRG has been the media sponsor of the Salvation Army Angel Tree for a number of years. WKRG anchors appear in public service announcements that encourage viewers to adopt angels for the trees. The first year we did this campaign, every angel was adopted from the trees. That had never happened before. Our Hurricane Ivan Relief efforts raised approximately \$270,000.

WKRG participates in the local United Way campaign in several ways. The station produces psa's for the campaign and supports it with airtime. Employees participate in the campaign also. This year, we raised \$5,700 through employee donations to the United Way of Southwest Alabama. A member of our staff serves on the communication committee and the general manager is a member of their board of directors.

Many other employees serve on non-profit boards in our community including The Girls Scouts of the Deep South Council, Boys and Girls Clubs of South Alabama, Ronald McDonald House, the Service Center of Catholic Social Services and Volunteer Mobile.

Employees speak at local schools on a regular basis. Sometimes it is an entire school assembly and sometimes it is one class. They talk about careers in broadcasting, weather and read to students. Employees often serve as master of ceremony for events or judges WKRG offers tours of the station to local schools.